

2026 K-12 STEM Outreach Grants



Ten \$500 awards to expand hands-on STEM learning and connect South Dakota students with career opportunities.

K-12 STEM Outreach Grants

South Dakota Biotech is accepting applications for ten \$500 K-12 STEM Outreach Grants. These microgrants help educators and community partners provide hands-on STEM learning, introduce students to South Dakota STEM careers, and remove barriers that can limit participation. Applications are due September 30, 2026. Selected recipients will be notified confidentially during the second week of October and publicly announced during the South Dakota Biotech Summit on October 27, 2026.

TEN \$500 AWARDS | APPLICATIONS DUE SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

Quick facts

Awards	Ten grants of \$500 each
Application deadline	September 30, 2026
Confidential notification	Second week of October 2026
Public announcement	October 27, 2026, at the South Dakota Biotech Summit
Project period	November 1, 2026-May 31, 2027
Payments	Expected by December 1, 2026; all funds issued by year-end
Final report	Within 30 days of project completion; no later than June 30, 2027

Purpose

The grants support meaningful K-12 experiences that strengthen student interest in STEM, connect learning to real South Dakota careers, and expand access to opportunities across the state. Projects may focus on any area of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics. Projects connected to biotechnology, bioscience, the bioeconomy, or related life science careers may receive priority consideration but are not required.

Priority consideration may be given to biotechnology- or bioscience-related projects; rural, Tribal, underserved, and first-time participating schools or organizations; and projects that address a clear participation barrier.

Who may apply

- Science, mathematics, CTE, agriculture, technology, or other K-12 educators at South Dakota public, private, or Tribal schools
- South Dakota schools, districts, and education programs

- Nonprofit organizations, university faculty or staff, and community organizations proposing a defined activity for South Dakota K-12 students
- South Dakota companies or industry organizations proposing a defined K-12 outreach activity or event

An designated partner is encouraged but is not required. Applicants may request help from South Dakota Biotech identifying an appropriate STEM professional, company, or research organization.

What strong projects include

- A hands-on investigation, demonstration, design challenge, site visit, or other active student experience
- A clear connection to STEM learning and a related South Dakota career pathway
- A realistic plan for how the \$500 will be used
- One anticipated student result, such as increased career awareness, completion of a learning activity, or participation in a new STEM experience
- A plan to reuse the materials, activity, or partnership when practical

Examples

- Classroom investigations in agriculture, human or animal health, environmental science, chemistry, physics, coding, cybersecurity, robotics, data science, biotechnology, bioprocessing, biofuels, or biomaterials
- Transportation or registration for a laboratory, company, college, research, competition, or career-exploration experience
- A scientist or industry professional visit paired with a student activity
- A community or family STEM event with a defined student-learning component

Allowable expenses

- Project materials, consumables, and modest equipment tied to a defined student activity
- Transportation, facility visits, event or competition registration, and substitute-teacher costs
- Accessibility accommodations, shipping, or rural connectivity needed for participation
- Other direct project costs approved by South Dakota Biotech

Expenses not supported

- Standalone prizes, awards, or unrestricted scholarships
- General classroom or office supplies without a defined project use
- Activities without a meaningful K-12 STEM learning or career-exploration component
- Regular salaries, organizational overhead, fundraising, or costs incurred before the award period

Application requirements

The short online application asks for:

- Applicant, school or organization, community, grades, and estimated students served
- A concise description of what students will do
- The connection to STEM learning and a South Dakota career pathway
- Project start and completion dates
- A simple itemized budget
- One anticipated result
- How the materials, activity, or partnership may be reused
- Whether a partner is confirmed, identified, or matching assistance is requested

Review and selection

Applications will be reviewed for:

- Expanded access or a clearly identified need
- Meaningful student participation
- Connection to South Dakota STEM learning and careers
- A feasible budget and timeline
- Potential for reuse or continued benefit

Biotechnology or bioscience alignment, geographic reach, rural or Tribal participation, first-time participation, and completion of any prior South Dakota Biotech grant reporting may be used to distinguish similarly rated applications.

Award announcement and Summit participation

Selected recipients will be notified confidentially during the second week of October and publicly announced during the South Dakota Biotech Summit on October 27. Summit attendance is encouraged but is not required. Recipients who cannot attend may provide a short recorded message, participate virtually if available, designate a representative, or allow South Dakota Biotech to recognize the project using the application summary.

Simple accountability

Recipients will complete a brief online closeout form for completion after the project ends and no later than June 30, 2027. The form will ask for:

- The activity completed and actual students reached
- How the \$500 was spent
- One result or lesson learned
- Whether the activity or materials will be used again
- One supporting item, such as a photo, lesson, agenda, student-work example, or resource

Only aggregate student information should be submitted. Do not include student names or other personally identifiable information. Media and testimonials are encouraged and may be used for promotion. Previous recipients must complete any overdue report before receiving another award.

Questions

Visit sdbio.org/stem-grants for the application and current program information. Questions may be directed to South Dakota Biotech at kara@sdbio.org.